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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PORT AU PRINCE 000595

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STATE FOR WHA/CAR  
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STATE PASS AID FOR LAC/CAR  
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WHA/EX PLEASE PASS USOAS

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [PKAO](#) [MARR](#) [ASEC](#) [HA](#)  
SUBJECT: USAID-MINUSTAH PARTNERSHIP ADVANCES PEACE IN  
HAITI'S SLUMS

REF: A. 05 PAUP 2493  
[1](#)B. 05 PAUP 2239

[1](#)1. This message is sensitive but unclassified: please protect accordingly.

[1](#)2. (U) Summary. This message summarizes the Haiti Transition Initiative (HTI), the USAID sponsored program to reduce violence and restore stability in Port au Prince's most volatile slums. USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) implements HTI through the International Organization for Migration (IOM). HTI has achieved initial success in several areas, and the program should serve as one possible model for a refocused and expanded effort to combat gangs and improve living conditions throughout the sprawling Cite Soleil slum, which has become the epi-center of gang activity that destabilizes the entire capital. HTI directly addresses the goal of reducing gang violence, which was identified as one of two critical measures to promote Haiti's transition to democracy. Moreover, President-elect Preval has identified improvement of conditions and the establishment of order in Cite Soleil as one of his most pressing priorities. The long-term solution to criminality in Cite Soleil is robust and community-based law-enforcement that goes well beyond military patrols and checkpoints. Nevertheless, the practices that HTI employed in Bel Air in developing community trust and support would apply in Cite Soleil. End Summary.

HTI Funds Programs in Bel Air  
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[1](#)3. (U) Post reprogrammed USD 3 million in FY 05 Economic Support Funds and added USD 2.5 of supplemental funding to fund HTI community programs. Post had originally allocated the ESF for violence reduction programs run by MINUSTAH's Disarmament, Demobilization and Re-integration (DDR) program, but shifted strategy when it became clear that the DDR program was ineffective. The program took hold in May 2005 when HTI, at the suggestion of community leaders in Bel Air, reconstructed a public performance center that had been burned to the ground after a dispute between pro-Lavalas supporters and the HNP. The reconstruction of this public performance center built confidence between community leaders and HTI program managers. The community leaders developed

additional proposals for HTI funded programs, including the renovation of roads and "Play for Peace" summer youth activities.

#### Gang-Related Killings Outrage Community Leaders

14. (SBU) Twice throughout the summer, gang members targeted "Play for Peace" activities. Community leaders were outraged and responded by giving HTI the names and locations of the gang members responsible for the killings. HTI approached the Brazilian MINUSTAH CIVPOL commander for the neighborhood with the information. At first, he hesitated to intervene questioning that the allegations that the gang members were targeting the summer camp activities. UN headquarters in New York applied pressure to MINUSTAH to provide security for the programs. The Brazilian's were receptive to advice from headquarters; it was at this point that 'the carrot started speaking to the stick' according to HTI program assistant Stephanie Broughton.

#### Enter MINUSTAH

15. (SBU) For each target neighborhood, HTI gave MINUSTAH maps and briefing papers describing the program, the type and location of projects, current security issues within the community, and opportunities for collaboration. They used this information to provide a strong security presence in these areas, but continued to focus on providing a security presence near HTI-funded programs and projects. Not only did MINUSTAH now have the intelligence it previously lacked, but also MINUSTAH had confidence and support of the communities

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they were supposed to protect.

16. (SBU) As the program progressed, Brazilian MINUSTAH forces set up a new base in the Fort National community of Bel Air. HTI followed and started working with community leaders to rebuild roads, create sidewalks, and repair canals while MINUSTAH established regular patrols. MINUSTAH forces living in the neighborhood also suggested projects. Community leaders and HTI program implementers noticed a change in the Fort National neighborhood: gang-members were losing power and were unable to intimidate the communities as employment became available, structural improvements became evident, and a security presence became strong. According to HTI, "People were working, MINUSTAH was patrolling, and gangs could no longer intimidate the population."

17. (SBU) Emboldened by the sight of MINUSTAH security forces, more communities in Bel Air requested HTI funded programs and a stronger security presence. In Autumn 2005, community leaders from Ti Cheri, a Bel Air community bordering Fort National, asked Fort National residents how they too could have the HTI/MINUSTAH support for their community. Fort National community leaders introduced leaders from Ti Cheri to HTI and HTI started on similar programs in the new neighborhood.

18. (U) At this point, HTI declared its Bel Air program a success. One neighborhood after another had requested an HTI-MINUSTAH presence. Areas off limits even to MINUSTAH forces six months prior, were accessible. In response to the disappearance of the gangs, community leaders from a Bel Air neighborhood called Gwo Woche (which means big rock in Creole and was named after a large rock where gang members would hold voodoo ceremonies before they would commit crimes) requested that HTI fund a basketball court to be built on top of the place where the rock stood.

#### Bel Air Residents Declare Peace

19. (U) Bel Air residents requested a holiday soccer

tournament in December 2005. HTI agreed and suggested the usual Play for Peace games. Bel Air community leaders disagreed with the name. "No," they told HTI, "we already have peace; let's call this the Tournament for Reconciliation." The community asked Brazilian MINUSTAH forces to play in an exposition match.

Next Step: Cite Soleil

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¶10. (SBU) HTI already implements projects in Cite Soleil yet suffers from a lack of cooperation with MINUSTAH. According to Broughton, "The Brazilians in Bel Air have been wonderful, but the Jordanians in Cite Soleil are not supportive of our proposed cooperation." HTI anticipates a rotation of MINUSTAH forces and hopes that it will bring further opportunity for cooperation. For the time being, HTI and the Brazilian MINUSTAH contingent have started projects along the road between Bel Air and Cite Soleil, which is also the line between Brazilian and Jordanian control. The plan is to achieve the same domino effect that traversed Bel Air by showing community leaders on one side of the street success on the other side of the street.

Comment

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¶11. (U) The main lesson learned from Bel Air is that the involvement and desire of the community is the most important factor in the three part equation. The other two parts of the equation are programs, that bring jobs and structural improvements to the community, and security, which reassures the community that it will not come under attack by those 'spoilers' who want to maintain chaos.  
SANDERSON